

**Organization Name: Yellowstone Country Montana Approved Audits/Applications
Committee 1/12/09**

Project Name: “Yellowstone is Open” Multi-media Marketing Campaign

Application Completed by: Robin Hoover

Narrative: Jan Stoddard-West Yellowstone Chamber

Please explain the need for this project as well as a clear overview of the concept of the project. Narrative must provide enough details that those reviewing the application can comprehend or visualize the full scope of the project. Narrative should be a full overview, yet explicit and to the point:

Yellowstone Country requests approval to allocate \$2,524.50 FY 09 OPPORTUNITY funds to assist the West Yellowstone Chamber & community with the “Yellowstone is Open” multi-media campaign. Project details are as follows in the narrative provided by the chamber: The volatility and constantly changing scene of over-the-snow access into Yellowstone Park this winter is creating challenges to keeping West Yellowstone’s winter business viable. While we have been promoting, ever since the Sullivan Court’s decision, a positive attitude of “business as usual,” various lodging, tour, and rental businesses have already reported confusion among winter consumers as to whether Yellowstone will be open this winter both at snow shows and incoming reservations. The market survey conducted by the West Yellowstone Marketing Committee in early September gathered feedback that local merchants were encountering this same confusion among retail shoppers, even before the court’s decision and even by those from nearby cities.

Marketing efforts to date have been specific, but have been limited by resources, time, and budget constraints. Private sector businesses already have and continue to invest heavily in fall snow shows, their own product materials, advertising, and marketing. However, even with these efforts, this is simply not enough. We know there is an expectation, especially among small businesses or those with resource constraints, that we need a larger, community-based effort to promote over-the-snow Yellowstone activities and out-of-the-park winter options.

The goal of this project is to positively promote West Yellowstone in winter regardless of any outcome. We will develop a comprehensive marketing and promotion campaign ready to launch for each of these three scenarios: 1) snowcoach and snowmobile over-the-snow access, 2) snowcoach only access, 3) no over-the-snow access (cross country skiing and snowshoe access only). Critical to the project is the ability to prepare in advance a specific promotional campaign. Then, when needed, we can launch with the most effective, targeted marketing approach to promoting our winter businesses and services for this winter.

In taking the most accurate information to winter consumers as quickly as possible, we can retain existing reservations and hopefully solicit more business from our target markets. Doing so benefits all businesses in our community large and small, secures employment, and sustains resort tax collections. Our most recent survey among the businesses in West Yellowstone reveals that December revenues were 10-25% below the previous year. The same decrease is forecasted

for the balance of the winter season. Individual businesses have reported decreases as high as 25-50% in revenue compared to last winter.

Develop Objectives

The purpose of this step is to establish realistic, achievable objectives and assess the feasibility of your project in relation to stated objectives. Your objectives should be specific, measurable and realistic.

We would develop a comprehensive marketing and promotion campaign focusing on “Yellowstone is Open” this winter. This campaign would also promote specific winter activities and events associated with West Yellowstone and the surrounding national forests. Each scenario would include positive publicity and promotion as needed during the next twelve weeks up until the opening date. Each scenario would also promote specific upcoming winter events (Ski Fest, Dog Sled races, Christmas Stroll, potential January snow races, Annual Snowmobile Expo) by working with these groups to leverage or enhance their existing publicity efforts.

The overall multi-media campaign includes specific media buys in our target drive markets located in eastern Idaho, southwestern Montana, and our primary Utah corridor market running from Bountiful through Salt Lake and into Utah County, as well as options in markets already being targeted by other travel groups for winter advertising.

Media placement may include, but not be limited to the following:

- Ads/advertorial in key newsprint publications (based on previous performance) including support print pieces.
- Ads/advertorial in specific activity-based publications for specific target markets. This could go beyond our drive markets. (For example, an ad in a snowmobile publication with a distribution that traditionally generates good response.)
- Radio spots at peak drive times or during winter sports shows
- Web ads, banners, or links on winter travel sites, complimentary travel organization sites, specific winter activity sites, blogging, monitoring, etc.
- Additionally, we would use as much “free press” as possible by submitting editorials, op-ads, press releases, informational releases (snow reports), etc. where the only cost would be to generate the content and distribute it.

The requested YCM budget portion would be to print and distribute a post-it note affix to a specific edition of Sunday newspapers in Salt Lake City and adjoining markets. *The printed post-it contains information that “Yellowstone is Open this winter” and contact information for the West Yellowstone Chamber of Commerce. Distribution of this note is to select zip codes identified as the optimal geographic areas for consumers with appropriate demographics. This printed piece is being distributed in the same issue as a full page, color print ad and a corresponding rotating web banner ad on the newspapers web site.*

Results will be measured in a number of ways:

- We will evaluate how closely this winter's resort tax collections match those of the previous year. We will feel very successful if we are able to at least come even to last winter since there are a number of other factors that will also affect travel this year.
- We will measure click-through rates, clicks on our breaking news and package specials buttons on our web site looking for a 20% increase over last year; and press release and op-ed pick-up of ten papers and/or web sites.
- We'll look at the Yellowstone Park West Gate figures and compare to a year prior with a goal of being even with last year.
- We can track email inquiries to the Chamber; however, we do know that it is likely that the vast majority will wind up directly with our private sector.

Identify the portions of your marketing plan, which support this project.

We believe that with an aggressive and well planned campaign we can help to regain winter season momentum. We will once again need to combat perceptions that 1) Yellowstone is closed and 2) West Yellowstone is closed because there's nothing to do; and, to encourage potential visitors to not defer their plans to visit Yellowstone in winter. At this point we are not certain that we will be able to increase the number of visitors—what we hope to do is to keep it from decreasing in relationship to last year. By including information and advertising focused on a wide variety of activities especially “out-of-the-Park” experience we would hope to extend some visitors' stays.

The health of our overall winter season will enable businesses to support and enhance our winter events by being open and by being sponsors. As well, virtually every dollar brought into West Yellowstone supports the Resort Tax. Keeping winter lively in West Yellowstone is important to all. Guests have a better experience when more businesses can be open. Our residents have employment opportunities and enjoy better services when more businesses can prosper.

Does this project support the Strategic Plan? **Yes** **No** If so, describe how.

This supports the Strategic Plan in a number of key areas including winter marketing and promotions, working with travel media, use of technology, promoting winter vacation packages, expanding winter tourism products, and working with Yellowstone Park to offer unique, interpretive winter experiences.

1.1.b. Continue winter marketing, promoting Montana as a superb destination for skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, snowmobile touring, ice fishing, and families and groups simply seeking a “snow experience”. Based on market research, accentuate images and messages that appeal to each winter target market segment. Encourage businesses and communities to create packages/events highlighting unique winter experiences, and list them on Montana's winter web site:

1.2.d. Target travel media to increase the visibility of Montana as a leisure travel destination. Proactively pitch Montana press releases and story ideas to travel media such as the Northwest Outdoor Writers Association and Outdoor Writers Association of America, as well as niche and online media. Disseminate leads and industry trend information to tourism businesses and attractions. Conduct publicity workshops for tourism businesses and attractions. Coordinate a publicity strategy with private/nonprofit partners, based on target markets and seasons.

1.4.d. Use technology to enhance Montana visitor information and marketing efforts. Visitors increasingly use technology before and during their trips to plan, make decisions, and enhance their experience. Evaluate ways to incorporate technology into Montana's comprehensive visitor information system, such as expanded use of TIS systems, 511 system, audio tour downloads in MP3 format, wireless hot spots, easy access to podcasts, Real Simple Syndication (RSS) news/information feeds, blogs, computer workstations, etc. Ensure that components of the system are promoted on web sites and in visitor guides.

5.1.a. Create vacation packages, and develop theme itineraries, designed for offpeak season niche markets targeted by promotion efforts. Package lodging with attractions, activities, events, meals, and transportation, focusing on off-peak season niche markets targeted by state/regional marketing efforts. Promote packages through tourism web sites, e-letters, podcasts, visitor centers, etc.

5.1.b. Expand winter tourism products/activities to draw visitors (spas, arts/culture, learning vacations, tribal activities). Identify opportunities to increase indoor and outdoor winter activities, such as ice skating/fishing, snowshoeing, dog sledding, hot springs, arts/cultural/historical events and attractions, etc. Package and promote to targeted resident and nonresident markets.

5.1.d. Identify new opportunities to provide guided educational/interpretive and adventure tours on public and private lands, and work to develop them. Baby boomers, geotourists, and heritage/cultural travelers are interested in educational and enriching experiences while traveling, but often lack the knowledge, skills and/or equipment to enjoy them on their own. Families seek interactive experiences that appeal to kids and teenagers. Private sector businesses can respond quickly to these opportunities. With the cooperation and support of land managers/owners, these businesses can offer value-added services to visitors.

You may put additional information on the back if necessary.

Please complete the appropriate project pages attached. If complete information is not available at the time of the application, it will be necessary to submit these details to the Audits/Applications Committee for final approval, prior to commitment of funds.

Detail pages attached Yes No

(You are not required to use these forms; however, all of the information must be provided in your application for full approval)

Budget page must be attached for approval.

REGION/CVB PROJECT BUDGET
FY 09 Opportunity
The Park is Open
campaign

	State Tourism Funds		Other Funds		Total
PROFESSIONALSERVICES:					
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
TOTAL	\$0		\$0		\$0
MARKETING/ADVERTISING:					
Printing cost of Post-It note	\$894.00	+	\$0	=	\$0
Distribution	\$1630.50	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
TOTAL			\$0		
TRAVEL:					
Personal Car	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
Commercial Transportation	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
Meals	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
Lodging	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
Vehicle Rental	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
TOTAL	\$0		\$0		\$0
OTHER:					
		+	\$0	=	
		+	\$0	=	
		+	\$0	=	
		+	\$0	=	
		+	\$0	=	
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TOTAL	\$2,524.50				
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REGION/CVB	PROJECT				
TOTAL		\$2,524.50	+	\$0	\$0